

Montana Department of Military Affairs  
**Disaster & Emergency Services Division**  
**State Emergency Coordination Center**

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Situation Report for July 29, 2003 (issued @ 14:00 hrs.)

***Wildfires of 2003***

**Attention \*** - New information shown in today's report displayed in ***Bold Italics*** type.

I. - Background Information:

● ***Fire activity throughout the state continues to generate concern on the part of many Montana citizens and lots of work for local government officials. High ridge temperatures, drying conditions, and possibly thunderstorms later in the week may create a substantial increase in fire activity. Fire managers believe a shift to these conditions could easily create a long summer siege.***

II. - Current Montana Fire Conditions: (as reported to NRCC ***July 28, 2003 (2200)***)

***NORTHERN ROCKIES DAILY SUMMARY***

***Northern Rockies Preparedness Level = 5***

***National Preparedness Level = 5***

***Light initial attack – 18 new fires for 2,323 acres***

- ***Flathead Area Command (Mann) has been ordered to manage large fires on the Flathead National Forest and Glacier National Forest.***
- ***Wedge Canyon – Type 1 Incident Management Team (Bennett), 19,667 acres, 5% contained, 20 miles E of Eureka, Montana.***
- ***Robert – Type 1 Incident Management Team (Stam), 10,175 acres, 0% contained, 8 miles N of Columbia Falls, Montana.***
- ***Trapper Creek Complex – Type 1 Incident Management Team (Raley) assumed command of the complex today at 0600. Complex is 16,500 acres, 35% contained, This Complex is made up the Trapper Creek (14,600 acres – 25% contained), Paul Bunyan (300 acres – 100% contained) and Wolf Gun (1,600 acres – 35% contained) fires located 45 statute miles NE of Kalispell, MT.***
- ***Little Salmon Creek Complex – This 250 acre, 0% contained, Wildland Fire***

*Use complex is located 47 miles SE of Kalispell, Montana in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. This complex, made up of the Pagoda (100 acres) and the Little Salmon (150 acres), is being managed to accomplish resource objectives. A Fire Use Management Team has been ordered.*

- *Black Frog Complex - Type 1 Incident Management Team (Frye), 8,000 acres, 27% contained. This Complex is made up of the Blackwall fire (4,693 acres), located 32 miles N of Salmon, Idaho and Frog Pond (2,112 acres), as well as numerous concentrations of spots on both fires (1,196 acres), located 34 miles S of Hamilton, Montana.*
- *Ross Creek – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Sandman), 180 acres, 50% contained, 20 air miles SW of Troy, Montana.*
- *Hidden Lake – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Chrisman), 3,500 acres, 60% contained, 30 miles W of Dillon, Montana.*
- *Big Creek – Transition to Type 3 organization today, 1,339 acres, 80% contained, 4 miles NW of Victor, Montana.*

**STATE FORECAST FOR MONTANA**  
**NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE GREAT FALLS MT**  
**430 AM MDT TUE JUL 29 2003**

**WEST OF THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE**

*Today - Areas Of Smoke Near Glacier Park. Otherwise Sunny. Highs 89 To 99.*

*Tonight - Clear. Lows 49 To 59.*

*Wednesday - Partly Cloudy In The Evening Then Clearing. Highs 90 To 100.*

**CENTRAL MONTANA**

*Today - Isolated Showers Northeast This Morning Otherwise Partly Cloudy. Not So Warm With Highs In The Mid 80s To Mid 90s.*

*Tonight. Clear By Dark. Lows In The 50s.*

*Wednesday. Mostly Sunny. Highs In The Upper 80s To Upper 90s.*

**SOUTHWEST MONTANA**

*Today - Mostly Sunny. Highs 90 To 95 But In The 80s In The Mountains.*

*Tonight - Clear By Dark. Lows In The 50s But In The 40s In The Higher Valleys.*

*Wednesday - Mostly Sunny. Highs In The 90s But 85 To 90 In The Mountains.*

**EASTERN AND SOUTHERN MONTANA**

*Lake Wind Advisory For Fort Peck Lake Today...*

*Today - Partly Cloudy. Windy East. Isolated Morning Thunderstorms Northeast And South Central. Highs In The 80s To Lower 90s.*

***Tonight - Mostly Clear. Lows In The 50s To Lower 60s.***

***Wednesday - Mostly Clear. Highs In The Mid 80s To Mid 90s.***

### **III. - Summary of Actions being taken by Local Government Officials:**

Local government resources from various jurisdictions have been actively engaged in fire fighting efforts, particularly during the past several days. The evacuation of residents whose properties have been threatened have been conducted as required.

<b><u>Local Emergency and Disaster Declarations</u></b>		<b><u>Date Filed</u></b>
Cascade County	Emergency Declaration (Box Canyon/Long Mtn.)	7/15/03
Garfield County	Disaster Declaration (Missouri Breaks)	7/15/03
Beaverhead County	Emergency Resolution (multiple fires)	7/17/03
Ravalli County	Emergency Declaration (Big Creek)	7/20/03
Flathead County	Emergency Declaration (Wedge Canyon)	7/21/03
<b><i>Sanders County</i></b>	<b><i>Resolution (Level II Fire Restrictions)</i></b>	<b><i>7/29/03</i></b>

### **IV. - Summary of State Activities and Resources Committed:**

#### **State Declaration:**

On 7/18/03, Governor Judy Martz signed an Executive Order (# 14-03) in which she declared a statewide emergency thereby enabling mobilization of state resources (including the Montana National Guard) should they be needed to help protect the life, health and/or property of Montana's citizens.

#### **FEMA Declarations:**

FEMA Fire Management Assistance Declaration approved on July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2003 for Missouri Breaks Complex fire.

FEMA Fire Management Assistance Declaration approved on July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2003 for Flathead County's Wedge Canyon and Roberts fires.

#### **Requests for State Assistance:**

- The Montana National Guard is assisting "initial attack" fire suppression operations by supplying 3 UH-60 (Blackhawk) Helicopters modules and ***approximately 35 people***. One helicopter is currently assigned to the Flathead Interagency Dispatch Center, another is assigned to the Helena Interagency Dispatch Center, and the third is assigned to Missoula. The Montana National Guard Personnel Resources currently allocated to wild land fire suppression duties stands at 35.
- One NG Liaison Officer has been assigned to the Northern Rockies Coordination Center (NGCC) in Missoula.

## **Status of State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC)**

- Montana DES is providing support to local governments through the State Emergency Coordination Center in Helena. The SECC is operating at Activation Level III with extended hours (0700-1900 every day).
- The State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC) will continue to monitor conditions and is prepared to provide 24-hour incident support to local governments. After office hours (i.e., 1900-0700) support is available through the DES Duty Officer who may be reached at (406) 841-3911.

## **Addendums to Situation Report**

As of: **July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2003**

### **Road Closures:** Information is current as of 07/29/03

#### **Southwest**

Montana Highway 43 and U.S. 93, closed recently because of the Black Frog fire complex, but reopened at noon on Friday, July 25. The roads are now open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., daily for the foreseeable future, officials said. The River Road will be open with pilot cars on the hour, from Lost Trail Pass to Gibbonsville, Idaho. This section of Highway 93 is closed at night, from 9 p.m. to 9 a.m. Forest Service officials have closed the Gibbonsville Road from where it enters the Salmon-Challis National Forest to where it leaves the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest. Highway 43 is now open 24 hours a day from Lost Trail Pass to Wisdom. The Salmon River Road has now been cleared to allow one lane passage. The Panther Creek Road is impassable near Panther Creek's confluence with the Salmon River due to landslides.

#### **Northwest**

The Wedge Canyon fire, 6-miles south of the Canadian boarder, and the Robert fire, between Coram and West Glacier, are actively requiring the continued closure of Secondary 486 to all but essential traffic.

***The Going-to-the-Sun Road is closed from West Glacier to Logan Pass, due to fires. Logan Pass remains open, but the only access is from the east side of the park. Highway 2 on the south boundary of Glacier provides access to the east side of the park. The Inside North Fork Road (north and south of Polebridge) is open from Fish Creek to Big Prairie, just north of Polebridge, but is closed from Big Prairie north.***

### **Reported Major Fire Activity:**

#### ***Black Frog Complex:***

<b><i>Residences threatened: 75</i></b>	<b><i>Commercial Property: 1</i></b>	<b><i>Outbuildings/Other: 10</i></b>
<b><i>Estimated Cost: \$4,500,000</i></b>	<b><i>% contained: 20%</i></b>	

#### ***Robert Fire:***

<b><i>Residences threatened: 200</i></b>	<b><i>Commercial Property: 24</i></b>	<b><i>Outbuildings/Other: 36</i></b>
<b><i>Estimated Cost: \$1,800,000</i></b>	<b><i>% contained: 0%</i></b>	

#### ***Wedge Canyon:***

<b><i>Residences threatened: 100</i></b>	<b><i>Commercial Property: 6</i></b>	<b><i>Outbuildings/Other: 23</i></b>
<b><i>Estimated Cost: \$5,700,000</i></b>	<b><i>% contained: 20 %</i></b>	

**Trapper Creek Complex:**

**Residences threatened:**  
**Estimated Cost: 272,000**

**Commercial Property: 3**  
**% contained: 35 %**

**Outbuildings/Other: 4**

**Current DES Situation Report From Flathead Area Command:**

**Wildfires in Glacier have caused the need for the evacuation of west Glacier and Apgar. There are approximately 250 homes in the area. The local Red Cross chapter has established a shelter in White Fish at the North Valley Hospital Basement.**

**Fire Restrictions and Closures**

<u>Zone</u>	<u>Restrictions</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>
Northwestern Zone	Stage II Restrictions	July 28, 2003
Southwestern Zone	Stage II Restrictions	July 28, 2003
Central Montana Zone	Stage II Restrictions	July 28, 2003
South Central Zone	Stage II Restrictions	July 28, 2003
Eastern Montana Zone		
<u>Stage I Restrictions (Billings)</u>		July 18, 2003
<u>Stage II Restrictions</u>		
State & Private: Carbon, Stillwater, Sweet Grass counties		July 25, 2003
Federal: Treasure, Musselshell, Bighorn, Yellowstone		July 18, 2003
<u>Stage I Restrictions (Lewistown)</u>		July 21, 2003
<u>Stage II Restrictions</u>		
State & Private: Liberty County		
Federal: Chouteau, Fergus, Judith Basin, Wheatland		July 25, 2003
<u>Stage I Restrictions (Miles City)</u>		July 26, 2003

**Web Links:**

**Glacier National Park Fire Management:**

<http://www.nps.gov/glac/resources/fires.htm>

**Northern Rockies Interagency Information Center**

<http://fs.fed.us/r1/fire/2003fires/index.htm>

**CENTRAL LAND OFFICE**

	<u>HUMAN</u>		<u>LIGHTNING</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>ACRES</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>ACRES</u>
Previous to Date	19	326	16	18.4
7/24 - 7/27/03 **	3	3.35	3	2.2
Current CLO Total	22	329.35	19	20.6

NORTHWESTERN LAND  
OFFICE

	HUMAN		LIGHTNING	
	Number	ACRES	Number	ACRES
Previous to Date	52	40.74	48	30.2
7/24 - 7/27/03	11	0.53	0	0.0
Current NWLO Total	63	41.27	48	30.2

SOUTHWESTERN LAND  
OFFICE

	HUMAN		LIGHTNING	
	Number	ACRES	Number	ACRES
Previous to Date	44	40.2	27	7.35
7/24 - 7/27/03	0	0	0	0
Current SWLO Total	44	40.2	27	7.35

EASTERN LAND OFFICE

	HUMAN		LIGHTNING	
	Number	ACRES	Number	ACRES
Previous to Date	0	0	3	780
7/24 - 7/27/03	0	0	0	0
Current ELO Total	0	0	3	780

NORTHEASTERN LAND  
OFFICE

	HUMAN		LIGHTNING	
	Number	ACRES	Number	ACRES
Previous to Date	0	0	3	51,619
7/24 - 7/27/03	0	0	0	0
Current NELO Total	0	0	3	51,619

SOUTHERN LAND OFFICE

	HUMAN		LIGHTNING	
	Number	ACRES	Number	ACRES
Previous to Date	2	2320	0	0
7/24 - 7/27/03	0	0	0	0
Current SLO Total	2	2320	0	0

DNRC DIRECT/COUNTY  
ASSIST STATEWIDE

